



Town of SOUTHAMPTON

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NEWS RELEASE

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Second Season for Flanders Farm Fresh Project *Community Market Open Saturdays Through Fall*

Amidst residents, dignitaries, and other local leaders, Southampton Town officials re-opened the Flanders Farm Fresh Food market this past Saturday at the David W. Crohan Center on Flanders Road.

Returning for its second season, the program provides access to locally grown fruits and vegetables for those in Flanders, Riverside, and Northampton. The effort began with Councilwoman Bridget Fleming and the Town's Housing Authority, with technical assistance by Sustainable Long Island. The Southampton Youth Bureau is also a participant, signing-up area young people to work as employees.

"We're building on last year's successful season," said Fleming. "The market provides work and great experience for young people, another market for the farmers, and high quality produce for the community."



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Sustainable Long Island had particular praise for the kickoff season, calling Fleming's advocacy "key" to "providing an invaluable service" to the three hamlets. In June, the group presented the councilwoman with the "Getting It Done" award at its Sixth Annual Sustainability Conference in Bethpage. The accolades were developed last year to "honor those who move beyond the talk toward implementation." Recipients have been individuals and groups who have identified community needs and taken projects from early concepts to successful completion.

Among last year's findings was that 38 percent of surveyed customers reported eating more fruits and vegetables since shopping at the market. The councilwoman added that none of the three hamlets have a supermarket, an absence consistently identified by focus group participants as a "high priority." Instead, the closest food stores are located along Riverhead's County Road 58, and on Montauk Highway in Hampton Bays. Neither is easily accessible without private transportation.

At the Flanders market, produce is bought exclusively from seven Southampton Town farmers and then sold weekly at the Crohan Community Center, which is also along the main route of Suffolk County's S92 bus. Fleming is also working with Senior Services to provide transportation to bring elder members of the community to the market, allowing them an opportunity to redeem their Senior Farmers Market Nutrition (FMNP) vouchers. The market also accepts cash, EBT, and WIC as forms of payment.

Adding to the enthusiasm is not only the experience of last year's success, but the infusion of support from new participants this season. Last month, New York State awarded Southampton Town \$10,000 through its FreshConnect grant program, which has supplied similar monies to 34 projects to give better access to farm products in low-income and underserved areas. According to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, approximately 1.5 million New Yorkers live in similar communities "with limited supermarket access."

"This is a model program in our Fresh Connect effort to link communities in need to fresh, healthy, local produce," said Scott Martella, Governor Andrew Cuomo's Regional Representative, at the opening on Saturday.

Additional funds have been donated through Community Development Block Grant funding, Bridgehampton National Bank, and Maran Corporate Risk whose Managing Partner Tom Terry was on hand to bring in the second season. "As a sponsor, Maran feels that it's about community and so it's a pleasure to help with this initiative. Fresh fruits and vegetables are something everyone needs and deserves. I'm happy to be here."

The market will be open every Saturday from June 30 through October 13, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the David W. Crohan Community Center, 655 Flanders Road.